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ON THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE INTERLUDES ATTRIBUTED TO JOHN HEYWOOD

The interludes which bear the name of John Heywood are interesting beyond any other group of the sixteenth century for their age, for their merit, but particularly for the great diversity of matter and treatment they show. The plays which will be discussed in this paper are *Love, Weather, Pardoner and Friar*, *The Four PP*, and *John the Husband*, *Tyb the Wife*, and *Sir John the Priest*, leaving out of consideration *Wit and Witless*, which is too undramatic to be of service. The reader of these plays will retain a vivid impression of the diversity I refer to, will have censured *Love* and *Weather* as dull and undramatic dialogues in the manner of the *débat*, and approved the other three as popular farces of uncommon freshness and vigor. This difference is the more striking because we are not accustomed to look for "styles," "periods," and "influences" in the rude work of the early sixteenth-century playwrights, but rather expect to find the product of each man marked by a definite and limited sameness.

It would be extraordinary if these differences should have passed unnoticed, as in fact they have not. It was even to be expected that eventually someone would challenge Heywood's right to certain of the plays. And this, too, has been done, in no uncertain terms, by Professor C. W. Wallace, who denies that Heywood wrote, or even could have written, the three popular plays of *The Pardoner*, *The Four PP*, and *John the Husband*.¹ His opinion is less significant as a piece of argument (for it is built upon the slimmest of evidence) than as an indication of justifiable skepticism. The question he raises has never been squarely faced, and it is worth while: Did John Heywood write both sets of interludes which are ascribed to him, and which are apparently so different in conception and handling?

The case against Heywood depends on two sources of evidence: the texts of the plays themselves² and the conditions under which they

¹ *Evolution of the English Drama up to Shakespeare* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1912), pp. 50 ff.

² All references to the texts of the plays in this article relate to the *Tudor Facsimile Texts*, ed. John S. Farmer.

were printed. For the sake of disposing of the smaller matter first, let us review now these questions of bibliography. Three of the five interludes were printed with Heywood's name on the title-page—*The Play of the Wether* and *A Play of loue*, both published by William Rastell in 1533, and *The Four PP*, published without date (but conjecturally in 1545)¹ by William Middleton. The other two were printed by William Rastell in 1533, without the author's name. These omissions, according to Professor Wallace, ought to be very significant; it is inconceivable, in his opinion, that the Rastells, relatives of Heywood, should print in 1533 two of his interludes with his name and two more without.

The argument is not strong. We may indeed wonder that the Rastells should have done as they did, but there is nothing incredible in it. We might even be satisfied merely with laying the blame upon the vagaries of sixteenth-century publishers, but there is a better reason observable from the texts themselves. The two plays which bear Heywood's name have title-pages and lists of characters; the two without have no title-pages, only head titles. Hence we are given a simple and reasonable explanation of why certain of Heywood's plays appeared without his name: in the form in which they were printed there was no room for it. To explain, of course, is not necessarily to prove; yet the burden of proof rests on the skeptics, who in this case have only raised a reasonable doubt. If other good arguments are established, then the bibliographical evidence lends helpful corroboration; but if, as I hope to prove, all other evidence against Heywood is weak, then nothing can be proved from the absence of a name or title-page.

The fact that one of the doubtful plays (*The Four PP*) was published with Heywood's name on the title-page is a serious stumbling-block to the skeptics, both because it is a piece of direct evidence against them, and because if that play is admitted into the Heywood canon there is then no reason why the others should be omitted. This dilemma has been solved by Mr. Wallace in somewhat too hasty a fashion: the piece was "attributed to Heywood by his publisher Middleton . . . and by everyone since." But we cannot dismiss evidence so summarily; and despite the known laxity of early

¹ Ward, *Eng. Dram. Lit.*, 1899, p. 244.

printers, we must accept the names they place on title-pages until strong evidence arises to the contrary. Since we cannot discredit Middleton in this instance, we must believe him, and thus admit a strong link between the two groups of plays we have to consider.

But the case against Heywood does not rest simply on bibliographical evidence, and we have yet to consider a problem of far greater importance—the singular difference between the *débat* plays and the popular farces. It will be well to bear in mind that to Mr. Wallace and such others as object to crediting Heywood with the popular plays, the Heywood canon resolves itself into the allegorical *Spider and the Fly*, the dialogue of *Wit and Witless*, the proverbs, and the plays of *Love* and *Weather*—all works of a definite cast. The argument against Heywood has been conveniently expressed by Mr. Wallace: "These three plays [*The Four PP*, *The Pardoner*, *John the Husband*] differ in dramatic conception, in characterization, and in acquaintance with men and events from the unquestioned literary product of . . . John Heywood. And unlike his, they have no didactic purpose."¹

This is a very autocratic dictum, and one which, as I hope to prove, is based upon generalizations that will not hold. An obvious objection can be made at once: that the critic does not allow for the effect of influences or even for the natural development of the dramatist's genius. According to the reasoning he tacitly avows, we should reject the theory that Shakespeare wrote both *Love's Labor's Lost* and *Twelfth Night* because they are so different in "dramatic conception and in characterization." And yet as much time may have elapsed between the writing of *The Play of Love* and *The Four PP* as between Shakespeare's plays. But let us leave these minor aspects for the time and devote ourselves to what is really the main problem—whether Heywood could have written all the plays attributed to him. We shall find, I think, that he could and did, with the possible exception of *John the Husband*.

The constant mistake has been to overemphasize the differences between the two groups of plays—the dulness of the one and the liveliness of the other. This has been the tendency even of men who have not had a case to prove. As a matter of fact the difference is by no means so great as it has been made out.

¹ *Evolution*, p. 52.

In the lowest order of the five plays, as regards dramatic interest, is the *Play of Love*; it is the closest to the old *débat* form. It is wearisome in its perpetual coil over nothing, its hairsplitting and strife between contrasted pairs of men; yet it has passages which would not shame the writer of *The Four PP*. The entrance of *No Lover nor Loved* with the burning squibs and the resulting trick played on *Lover Loved* make good, lively drama, which is no whit below the level of rough humor shown in *The Four PP* and *John the Husband*. Then the long monologue of *No Lover nor Loved* is quite as good in its coarse humor and lively satire as the narratives of the Pardoner and the Palmer in *The Four PP*. In these two respects the *Play of Love* belies its reputation for dulness and gives us a glimpse of powers that might easily become capable of producing *John the Husband*.

The Play of Wether is a distinct advance in dramatic interest. It may even be called more dramatic than any except *John the Husband*. In *The Four PP* there are only four characters, who do nothing but sit and talk; in *The Pardoner and the Friar*, until the very end, there are but two contrasted figures who backbite and preach tediously; *The Play of Love* is out of the question. But in *Weather* there are ten characters, who are constantly entering and going off, so that there is more actual motion on the stage than in all the other three plays put together. Furthermore, both the author's dramatic sense and his feeling for character are displayed in the choice of applicants to Jupiter for weather, particularly in bringing in at the end the boy, "the least that can playe" (who must have made a great hit, as he would even now), and in the skill with which the various types are sketched in and opposed to one another. The general course of the play is heightened by the quarreling of the two Millers—tedious now, but not then—and of the Lady and the Laundress, amusing enough still. The humor and truth to nature of these speeches are capital,¹ and the part of Little Dick is masterly; it is the boy to the life, set

¹ The entering speeches of the characters are particularly good, both because they come so patly in the dialogue, and because they are so well in character. For example, the Ranger enters:

<i>Ranger.</i>	God be here, now Cryst kepe thys company
<i>Mery report.</i>	In fayth ye be welcome euin very skantely.
	Syr for your comyng what is the mater.
<i>Ranger.</i>	I wolde fayne speke with the god Iupyter.

forth with an economy of deft touches that would please the most rigid of classicists. Altogether, "in dramatic conception, in characterization, and in acquaintance with men and events," *Weather* is a play of marked craftsmanship and is not for a moment to be compared in these respects with *Love*.

Just as I have shown that these two plays, and particularly one of them, are by no means the dull dialogues¹ they have been called, so it is possible to show that two of the other three plays are not quite so much farther advanced in dramatic art as critics have usually said. *The Pardoner*, as I have noted, is for the most part a mixture of harangues and recriminations on the part of a Pardoner and a Friar, who are delivering their sermons in the same church and to the same congregation. It is dull reading—duller probably to the general taste than any save *Love*—although it is easy to see that much fun could be got out of the parts by good low comedians. A fine bit of farce comes in at the very end, when the Curate and Constable Pratt try to eject the obstreperous pair. *The Four PP* is long drawn out, although the character delineation is excellent and the satire keen. And there is not the least bit of action. *John the Husband* is easily the most dramatic of the five, the play in which

Mery report. That wyll not be but ye may do thys
Tell me your mynde I am an officer of hys.
Ranger. Be ye so, mary I cry you marcy
Your maystershipp may say I am homely
But syns your mynde is to haue reportyd
The cause wherefore I am now resortyd
Pleasyth it your maystershypp, etc.

Or the Water Miller:

What ye deuyll shold skyl though all ye world were dum
Syns in all our spekyng we neuer be hard, etc.

And the Wind Miller (I have introduced punctuation here):

How! is all the wether gone or I come?
For the passyon of god help me to some!

Thus the Gentlewoman:

Now good god what a foly is this
What sholde I do where so mych people is
I know not how to passe in to god now.

And best of all the boy, who perceives Merry Report first:

This same is euen he by allycklyhod
Syr I pray you be not you master god.

¹ If we are only to allow that Heywood wrote such debates as *Love*, *Wit and Folly*, and even *Weather*, how are we to understand Heywood's own epigram on himself? "Art thou Heywood with the mad merry wit?" he asks, and "Art thou Heywood that hath made many mad plaies?" As fond as our Tudor forefathers were of *débats*, their ideas of humor were not so far different from ours that they would call *Love* or even *Weather* a "mad plaie," or describe its wit as mad and merry. Such epithets are exactly appropriate to the realistic interludes of *The Pardoner*, *The Four PP*, and *John the Husband*.

there is most going on and which comes nearest to real farce in our sense of the word. But the man who could have written *The Four PP* could also have written *John the Husband*; that Mr. Wallace himself maintains. And the same skill in character and situation which shows in *The Four PP* is evident to the most casual reader in many parts of *Weather*, and even in two places in *Love*. There is in reality nothing whatever against the theory of single authorship of these plays, from the point of view of "dramatic conception, characterization, and acquaintance with men and events," if we allow, as we logically must, for the natural processes of development. If we place *Love* as the earliest play and *John the Husband* as the latest, there is observable a development away from plays on words and finicky arguments toward real comic incident which is similar to Lyly's progress from *Campaspe* to *Mother Bomby*, and to Shakespeare's from *Love's Labor's Lost* to *Twelfth Night*. And the periods limited by the plays cited were about equal—i.e., ten years.

It may be objected that dividing the interludes into earlier and later "periods," while it may explain many differences, will not solve the problem of subject-matter, of why one group is concerned with disputes upon abstractions and the other with picturing the life of the times. As a matter of fact, a thoroughly plausible explanation of the phenomenon has been adduced.¹ *Weather* and *Love* are didactic, after the manner of the mediaeval *débats*; they are not concerned with religious satire or contemporary life. The other three, while possibly didactic and argumentative in parts, are much more satirical of church abuses after the manner of contemporary French farce, and are little comedies of realism. Analogues, if not sources, for *John the Husband* and *The Pardoner*² have actually been found. The sharp difference in the matter of the interludes may thus be explained by the appearance of a new and powerful influence. There were plenty

¹ Cf. K. Young, "Influences of the French Farce on the Plays of John Heywood," *Mod. Philol.*, June, 1904.

² For *The Pardoner*, the farce d'un pardonneur, d'un triacleur, et d'une tavernière; for *John the Husband*, the farce of Pernet qui va au vin. The resemblances between the French and the English are too pronounced to permit doubt of interrelation. I cannot accept Mr. Wallace's suggestion (*Evolution*, p. 51) that the French may "equally well, even more probably, have borrowed" from England. When we find two nations developing the same kind of literature, we may feel sure that the lending, if any existed, was done by the nation which possessed the literature first. France had had the farce since the time of Maître Patelin.

of opportunities, in the hobnobbing of England and France during the second and third decades of the century, for the English to see French farces. It is worth noting that the Field of the Cloth of Gold took place in 1520, close to the time when the interludes are supposed to have been written.

We may safely conclude, then, that there is nothing in the natures of the plays themselves which invalidates the theory that one man wrote them; a conclusion which is strengthened by the fact that one of the doubtful plays is ascribed to Heywood by authority which we have no right to dispute. Yet while, on the strength of that authority, and on general questions of style, we must admit *The Four PP* to the Heywood canon, the problem of the other two plays is not so easily settled. To prove that there is no reason why they *may not* have been written by Heywood is not to prove that they *were*. Yet by a more careful examination of the two questionable plays, we can, I think, establish for one of them a greater likelihood of Heywood's authorship than of any other man's, and thus corroborate by one-half accepted tradition.

It will be well to glance briefly over the steps by which this tradition has attained growth—and a very hollow tradition it is. Bale,¹ our first and greatest authority, and Pits,² who follows Bale closely, give as Heywood's dramatic writings only *The Four PP*, *Love*, and *Weather*. To Anthony à Wood, in *Athenae Oxonienses*, seems to be due the honor of adding to the list *The Pardoner* and *John the Husband*, but where his authority came from I cannot discover.

¹ In his *Scriptorum Illustrium Majoris Bryttannie Catalogus* Basiliae (1557). This is the second, revised edition of his work, and hence is more authoritative than the earlier. This is what Bale says of Heywood (*Posterior Pars*, p. 110): "Ioannes Heyuode, ciuis Londinensis, musices ac rhythmicæ artis in sua lingua studiosus, & sine doctrina ingeniosus, pro choreis post comessationes & epulas hilariter ducendis, spectaculis, ludis, aut personatis ludicris exhibendis, aliisque uanitatibus fouendis, multum laborabat, ediditque

<i>De aura comoediam</i>	Lib. 1.
<i>De amore tragoediam</i> [sic]	Lib. 1.
<i>De quadruplici P.</i>	Lib. 1.
<i>Centum epigrammata</i>	Lib. 1.
<i>Ducenta alia epigrammata</i>	Lib. 1.
<i>Epigrammata proverbialia</i>	Lib. 1.

Sed in promouenda veritate nihil egit, ueritatis fastiditor. Vixit ille anno Domini 1556."

² *Ioannis Pitsei Relationum Historicarum de Rebus Anglicis Tomus Primus Parisiis M.D.C.XIX.* Pits adds to the bibliographical note *De aranea & musca versus Anglicos, Librum vnum*, and *Rithmos alios Anglicos, Librum vnum*.

Everyone since his day appears to have accepted his word without question. It is "generally accepted."

With this verdict as regards one of the plays I have no inclination to quarrel. I believe *The Pardoner and the Friar* offers strong internal evidence that it is by the same hand which wrote *The Four PP*. The point has frequently been urged before. Not only are the Pardoners in the two interludes strikingly similar, in their knavish parade of insincere piety and in their display of fraudulent relics, but the relics themselves are in two cases the same, the likeness extending even to the texts themselves.

The Pardoner (Sig. A 2 verso):

And another holy ralyke here may ye see
The great too of the holy trynyte.
And who so euer ones dothe it in his mouthe take
He shall neuer be dysseasyd with the tothe ake, etc.

The Four PP (Sig. C 1 verso):

Nay syrs beholde here may ye se
The great toe of the trinite
Who to this toe any money voweth
And ones may role it in his moueth
All his Lyfe after I vndertake
He shall be ryd of the toth ake.

The Pardoner (same page):

Here is another relyke eke a precyous one
Of all Hallows the blessyd Jaw bone.

The Four PP (Sig. C 1):

Frendes here shall ye see euyn anone
Of all Hallows the blessyd iaw bone
Kys it hardely with god deuocion.

It is easy to see why these two relics should turn up in both places. They are the most grotesque and striking of the whole scandalous list in *The Pardoner*, and when the author was tempted to repeat the success of this burlesque in another interlude, he took over bodily the two choicest bits. It may be objected that someone else may have pillaged Heywood, or vice versa; but I believe that we must be careful how we make charges of plagiarism in a period when the dramatic writing of this class was confined to a limited circle at court,

in which each man knew his own and his fellow's work too well. Furthermore, we do not find one dramatist pillaging another as a practice; they went to the classics or to French farce when they lacked inspiration. The parallelisms in *The Four PP* and *The Pardoner* are much more likely to show Heywood borrowing from Heywood than from anyone else. A direct chain of evidence, then, connects *The Pardoner* with the didactic plays of *Love* and *Weather*: printer's authority binds *The Four PP* to them, and verbal similarities bind *The Pardoner* and *The Four PP*.

There remains, then, only *John the Husband* unaccounted for, and I confess that I cannot definitely associate it with Heywood. It may well be his—but may it not as well be another's? Until we know something more of the authors of *Tom Tiler* and *Thersites*, until we find undoubted specimens of the work of Cornish, Crane, and even the youthful Sir Thomas More, we cannot with much show of evidence say that the style is Heywood's. The fact of its publication in 1533 by William Rastell lends a faint support to Heywood's claim. Mr. Wallace has put in a strong plea for William Cornish, the master of the Chapel Royal, as the author of the three questioned plays, on the simple basis of Cornish's great activity in preparing the revels at court in the first fourteen years of Henry VIII. But Cornish was not the only man writing interludes before 1533, nor have we any evidence that his work was more like these interludes than the early plays of Heywood himself. Our entire information as to what Cornish was capable of writing, aside from songs and pageants, consists in the knowledge that in 1515 he produced a dramatic arrangement of Chaucer's *Troilus and Cressida* and shortly after an interlude in which the actors took the parts of Sun, Moon, Wind, Rain, and other natural phenomena. Surely there is nothing here which suggests either the substance or the manner of *The Four PP*. Nor was Heywood the "dramatic successor" of Cornish, as Mr. Wallace has called him.¹ Cornish died in 1523, and his successor in office and as director of the Chapel children when they played at court was William Crane. When the payee for plays by the Chapel is named, it is always he, never Heywood. So until we know more of Crane, we must be careful of what we say about the relations of Cornish and Heywood.

¹ *Evolution*, p. 53.

Various attempts have been made to deduce the chronology of the plays, without much success, because there is so little to get hold of. Swoboda started it in his dissertation on "John Heywood als Dramatiker,"¹ in which he placed *The Pardoner* first because of the reference in it to Leo X, who died in 1521,² and because of the general youthfulness of it; and *The Four PP* last, because it was printed last and seemed older. Brandl³ planned his chronology according to the religious satire in the plays; he too put *The Pardoner* early and *The Four PP* later. With this relationship I am in agreement, for it seems clear from all indications that *The Four PP* is younger than *The Pardoner*. It is more varied in character, not so bound to the device of antiphonal dialogue, fuller of matter, more carefully written. And the treatment of the repeated bogus relics in *The Four PP* is precisely what one would expect in a later writing; not that the list is longer, as Swoboda observes, which really proves nothing (as Pollard⁴ remarks), but that the treatment is more *dramatic*, more elaborated for the fun to be derived. In *The Pardoner* the relics are recited in a monologue; in *The Four PP* the recital of the Pardoner is broken in upon by the comments of his listeners, so as to bring out the full richness of humor of these brilliant absurdities. In *The Pardoner* there is plain statement in soliloquy; in *The Four PP* there are character reaction and interplay, excellently worked out. The first is the original, the second the developed form. It could not be otherwise.

While I agree with Swoboda in the relative position of the two plays, I cannot believe that they were so far apart as he would place them. The reference to Leo X may mean that *The Pardoner* was written before his death, but not necessarily. At any rate, it could be dated as late as 1521, which must bring it after the Field of the Cloth of Gold. Swoboda limits the date of *The Four PP* to 1535 at the latest, on the dubious assumption that the passage in *Thersites* (produced in 1537 and possibly in 1536) in which Thersites

¹ In *Wiener Beiträge*, III, 1888.

² Sig. A 3:

Worshypfull maysters, ye shall vnderstand
That pope Leo the .x. hath graunted with his hand
And by his bulles, conformed vnder sede
To all maner people, bothe quycke and dede . . . etc.

³ "Quellen des weltlichen Dramas," *Quellen und Forschungen*, LXXX.

⁴ In Gayley, *Representative Eng. Comedies*.

boasts of going down to harrow hell, goes back to the Pardoner's tale of the rescue of Margery Coorson. The parallelism is too slight to build on; and I cannot believe that two plays which are so closely bound together by the characters of the Pardoners and so clearly, in those characters, actuated by the same inspiration should be composed so far apart. It is a question of psychological probability, based upon plain common-sense, to which purely theoretic arguments must yield.

For this reason I would place *The Four PP* after *The Pardoner*, but nearer it—say 1524–27. *The Play of Love* has every evidence of being the earliest of them all. It is the kind of thing a very young man would do; it is nearly always the young men who write the hairsplitting *débats* on love and find delight in playing with words. Lyly's *Euphues* came at the outset of his career; Ford published his idealistic dissertations on love and honor in his youth. *Love's Labor's Lost* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* came before *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*, and *Venus and Adonis* before the *Sonnets*. *Weather* seems to me to be connected with *Love* by certain tricks of style—by plays on words, by extensive use of alliteration, by passages composed of lists of nouns, sometimes in burlesque alliteration¹—and by the didactic feeling which relates them both to the

¹ Some examples of such word play are the following:

Weather, Sig. A (4) (Rastell edition):

For all weathers I am so indifferent
 Sunne lyght, mone light, ster light, twy light, torch light,
 Cold, hete, moyst dry haile raine frost snow lightning thunder
 Cloudy, misty, wyndy, fayre, fowle aboue head or vnder
 Temperate or distemperate what euer it be. . . .

Cf. also the alliterative list of towns on Sig. A 4, *verso*:

At Louin, at London, and at Lombardy,
 At Baldocke, at Barfold, and at Barbary,
 At Canterbury, at Couentry, and at Colchester
 At Wansworth, at Welbecke, and at Westchester, etc.

Such compilations as these, and especially the second set, recall at once similar lists in *Love*, as for example the following (Sig. B 2):

The smothest the smyrkest the smallest
 The trewest, the trymest, the tallest,
 The wysest, the wylyest, the wyldest,
 The meryest, the manerlyest, the myldest, etc.

More in the nature of plays on words are these lines, *Weather*, Sig. A 3:

<i>Jupiter.</i>	Why, what arte thou that approchyst so ny?
<i>Mery report.</i>	Forsothe and please your lordshyppe it is I.
<i>Jupiter.</i>	All that we knowe very well, but what is I?
<i>Mery report.</i>	What I? some say I am I perse I
	But what maner I so euer be I
	I assure your good lorshypp I am I.

And this (Sig. D 2):

The more ye byb the more ye babyll
 The more ye babyll the more ye fabyll
 The more ye fabyll the more vnstabyll
 The more vnstabyll the more vnabyll, etc.

(Continued on p. 102)

débats. That it is the younger is proved by the advance in dramatic skill which has already been pointed out.

As to the place of *John the Husband* I am in doubt. From the point of view of variety of incident it would seem to come as a culmination in growth, but I am not sure that we can rely on that argument. While there is more incident than in *The Four PP*, there is no whit better characterization, and growth in characterization is more significant than any fluctuation in amount of incident; for the latter may follow a fashion, while the former comes from the dramatist himself, grows with him, and is dependent on no influences but the dramatist's own development.¹ It is probable, moreover, that the two plays which show French influence most—*The Pardoner* and *John the Husband*—would not stand far apart. But after all, did Heywood write *John the Husband*?

My conclusion as to the order of the plays is this: *Love*, ca. 1518, when Heywood was near twenty; *Weather*; *The Pardoner*, ca. 1521; *The Four PP*, ca. 1525 or even earlier; and *John the Husband*, later or earlier according to the prejudice of the reader. This arrangement is in the greatest degree provisional and uncertain, although I regard it as satisfactory enough in our present state of ignorance; there are, for instance, complicating circumstances which are too vague to argue upon, yet too likely to leave out of consideration. In the first place, it is not reasonable to assume that after the entry of the French influence Heywood never returned in his plays to his earlier didactic manner, either from choice or to please someone, like the Princess Mary, to whom the satirical pieces might not be agreeable; hence there may be excuse for dating *Weather* later than I have. In the second place, *The Pardoner*, which seems a less skilful piece of drama than *The Four PP* or *John the Husband*, may owe its defects, not to

Compare these with the following representative extracts from *Love* (Sig. B (3) verso):

Anone there was I loue you and I loue you
 Louely we louers loue each other
 I loue you and I for loue loue you
 My louely louyng loued brother
 Loue me, loue the, loue we, loue he, loue she,
 Depper loue apparent in no twayne can be, etc.

There is much more of this primitive euphuism in *Love* than in *Weather*, as might be expected from its earlier composition and the nature of the subject.

¹ It is worth adding that *The Four PP* was much more popular and lasted longer on the common stage than did the other interludes. In the play of *Sir Thomas More*, written in Elizabeth's reign, the troupe which is going to present a play before the banquet offers for consideration a number of pieces, among which is *The Four PP*.

extreme youth, but to the author's attempting for the first time a new kind of drama. Finally, whatever the precise dates of the plays, which I regard as of slight account, I would put them all before the Protestant Reformation; for I cannot conceive a devout Catholic, such as Heywood proved himself to be, who might satirize the abuses in his church when it was strong and well, carrying on the satire so blithely and with so much unforced enjoyment while it was in bitter need. Perhaps the appearance of so many of Heywood's plays in 1533 meant that the Reformation had, temporarily at least, put an end to his writing.

While we are occupied with Heywood, it may be worth while to consider one more point, which likewise has never received adequate attention: how and by whom his plays were presented. It has been generally reported that they were written for the children of the Chapel Royal, but this is by no means certain. The assumption arose, so far as I can discover, from the facts that Heywood on one occasion (in 1538) played before the Princess Mary with a company of children,¹ and that in one of his plays a child is called for. But we must bear in mind, first, that the company directed by him in 1538 is not said in the record of payment to be the Chapel boys; and secondly, that in only one of the five plays is a child obviously demanded, and then it is only one boy. Little Dick in *Weather* is described as a boy "the least that can playe," but there is no evidence that the other characters were children, and Merry Report, at least, was an adult, as is shown by his attitude of teasing encouragement to Dick. It is usually said that the plays were written for children; yet except for this one character I have failed to find in any part of them evidence supporting such an assumption.

Of course the possibility still remains that they were given in part or in whole by children; yet the meager array of evidence we have hardly justifies that conclusion. We fall upon greater difficulties if we suppose that the Chapel boys were the actors. We are at once puzzled to account for the circumstance of their being directed by a man who was in no way connected with the Chapel. True, Heywood may have been a boy there at one time, but during the

¹ The occasion is frequently referred to in histories of the stage. See, for instance, Wallace, *Evolution*, p. 84.

period in which the plays were written he was official player of the virginals and was enrolled among the musicians. All this time, moreover, the Chapel boys were playing under their regular masters, Cornish and Crane.

Taking all this into consideration, it seems impossible to assign Heywood's plays definitely to the Chapel Royal. There were other means of presenting them: perhaps by the regular troupe of interlude players (John English and his three companions), perhaps by the gentlemen of the Chapel, who were accustomed frequently to play in the court. We may wonder who were the boys with whom Heywood entertained the princess in 1538, and for lack of better knowledge suppose that they were of the Chapel Royal. But there was another body of children at court with whom Heywood must have come into closer contact—they were the six singing boys who formed part of the minstrels, and whose existence has heretofore been overlooked.¹ Since Heywood was himself one of the minstrels, or musicians, his relations to these lads must have been closer than to the Chapel. To be sure, it is not known that they ever acted; yet they were ready at hand, and may very possibly have been drilled for the stage by Heywood. I submit the hypothesis for what it is worth.

The investigator who is trying to establish the Heywood canon and who has gathered together the known facts which will help him is astonished to find how blank is our ignorance in many directions and how much unsubstantiated theorizing has passed current for fact. Yet there is enough reliable evidence to vindicate the traditional canon in regard to all but one of the plays. There is nothing to prove that *John the Husband* is by Heywood; but there is nothing to prove that it is not. It is perfectly possible that the man who wrote *The Four PP* and *The Pardoner* could have written this play; and I for one shall be glad to go on calling it Heywood's until some really worthy claimant appears.

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¹ These singing boys, called Children of the Privy Chamber and put in the charge of one of the luters, are met with in the court accounts of Mary and Elizabeth, and are known to have existed as early as 1465. In that year certain men were directed to gather by impressment "quosdam Pueros, Membris Naturalibus Elegantes, in Arte Ministrellatus instructos" wherever they could be found. See Rymer's *Foedera*, XI, 375.